

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

EUROPE AREA PRESIDENCY

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To: Area Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents in the Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Austria, German-speaking Switzerland and The Netherlands.

Dear Brethren:

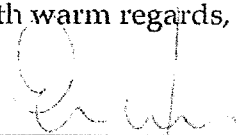
Assisting Those Who Struggle with Faith and Testimony

The technology and modern communication tools of our day enable members, more than ever before, to access both positive and negative information about the Church. Unfortunately some choose to dwell on half-truths or inaccurate information regarding the Church, its history, or its leaders, which often results in a crisis of faith and testimony.

We invite you as priesthood leaders to work patiently and lovingly with these members in a way that is most likely to address their concerns and help them regain their spiritual equilibrium. The attached document has some suggestions for your consideration in working with members who are struggling. We also hope you will help all members under your care understand the need to continually and consistently do those things that will strengthen their faith and testimonies.

We are so grateful for your dedicated service. May you feel the Lord's guidance as you strive to bless the lives of His children.

With warm regards,



Erich W. Kopischke
Europe Area President



José A. Teixeira
Second Counselor, Europe Area Presidency

Assisting Members Who Struggle with Faith and Testimony

The following observations may be helpful as you work with members who are struggling with faith and testimony, particularly as a result of being exposed to information that discredits the Church, its leaders, and its history.

- The Church does not hide historical facts. In fact, it makes every effort to be open and honest about its past and current actions.
- The Internet and digital records now make information about the Church available to many who, because of language and other limitations, may not have previously known this information. This does not mean that such information was hidden by the Church; it was simply not as readily available.
- Joseph Smith and the prophets who succeeded him were not wicked or deceiving men. Joseph did not become a “fallen prophet.” He, along with all other prophets of this dispensation, had human weaknesses. Joseph often admitted this, and the scriptures sometimes confirmed that God was not pleased with him. However, he and succeeding prophets worthily exercised their priesthood keys and led the Church in their time as directed by God through revelation. The same is true of President Thomas S. Monson today.
- Obtaining or regaining a testimony of Joseph Smith as a prophet of God and of the Restoration of the gospel that occurred through him is and always will be a spiritual quest. Nephi reminded his brethren of the Lord’s words: “If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you (1 Nephi 15:11).

Priesthood leaders who are working with individual members who are expressing doubts should do the following:

- Receive them with love and understanding and let them know that all of us have a need to increase our faith (Luke 17:5).
- Provide the best possible answers to the questions the member is asking.
- Teach the spiritual path the person must walk to gain or regain a testimony (Alma 32), including helping him or her remember past spiritual witnesses (D&C 6:22,23), and avoid contact with evil influences (Moroni 10:30).
- Emphasize that faith is a conscious choice that each must make.
- Ensure that the member receives love and support from home teachers, quorum leaders, etc.

As guided by the Spirit, the scriptures, and Handbook 1 (section 6.7.3 material on Apostasy), priesthood leaders may need to take disciplinary action with those members who persist in publically opposing the Church and its leaders after they have been lovingly worked with and corrected by their bishop or higher authority. Alma’s counsel is important in this regard: “Now repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment” (Alma 42:16).

May the Lord bless you as you minister in love to those who are struggling with issues of faith and testimony.